

## **Iakovleva L. The rationale of the legitimacy of public power in liberal, republican and discursive traditions**

The phenomenon of power not only plays a key role in politics, but it is also central to the entire complex of social relations.

The problem of power is an inexhaustible topic for scientific research, philosophical reflection, literary reading and artistic interpretations. For this reason, any research of power needs preliminary explanations regarding its subject and the introduction of distinctions to narrow the problematic field. The first distinction in this research is the opposition of power and violence, which allows focusing on one of the traditions in interpretations of the legitimacy of public power. The second distinction in the understanding of power is between approaches of atomism (individualism) and holism (collectivism). This is the distinction between intelligent and selfish individuals who pursue private interests and individuals (also intelligent, but not extremely selfish), who are aimed at achieving the common good. It is noted that the legitimacy of power cannot be justified by the potential threat of the use of violence; therefore the only source of it is the support of citizens. Only public power can be legitimate. The third distinction is the subject of this research: the analysis of the features of liberal, republican and discursive traditions in the treatment of publicity, public sphere (space), legitimacy of public power, etc. The research of publicity or public sphere was initiated in the liberal tradition. The representatives of the liberal tradition stressed the need for openness, rationality, and criticism in relations between power and citizens. The representatives of the republican tradition continued the research of public sphere and public power in terms of inclusiveness (inclusion) in the ruling process of the majority of citizens, their equality to choose and be elected. They reminded that democracy is, first and foremost, a «shared cause» for all citizens. Public sphere is characterized by the versatility and the competitiveness of citizens who possess civil (republican) virtues.

In the works of the German researcher J. Habermas, who argues with the liberals and the republicans, the normative ideal of publicity (or «public sphere» in the English translation of the Habermas's term «Offentlichkeit») is presented in terms of the discursive approach.

Thus, the prerequisite for the legitimacy of public power is democratic elections, the result of which gives winners the right to power; the legitimacy of public power is substantiated in the moral and political discourse; the process of ensuring the legitimacy of public power requires communication based on rational arguments between power and citizens.

To sum up, the legitimacy of public power is created and reproduced as a result of rational interaction in the public sphere between power and citizens. This allows overcoming both the selfishness of individuals and the compulsion of the state.

**Key words:** public power, legitimacy of public power, liberalism, republican tradition, discourse approach, communication.